

## PETRONIUS 35.4\*

... super scorpionem + pisciculum marinum +, super sagittarium oclepetam, super capricornum locustam marinam, super aquarium anserem, super pisces duos mullos.<sup>1</sup>

The unsoundness of the area following *scorpionem* is brought out by its extreme vagueness (Heinsius<sup>2</sup>) coupled with the stylistically inelegant repetition of *marinum/-am*, — objectionable in Petronius. I should like to submit what I believe to be a plausible way of restoring the text.<sup>3</sup>

Obviously, any approach ought to start from 39.11 in *scorpione uenenarii et percussores*, a statement which reminded me of the fish known as *draco*. This venomous little sea dweller<sup>4</sup> is spoken of several times by ancient authors<sup>5</sup>, but its main features are to be found summarized in Plin. *N.H.* 32.47 *draco quidem marinus ad spinae suae, qua ferit, uenenum . . .*; 32.148 '*draco* . . . ; est autem gerriculæ amplæ similis, aculeos in branchiis habet ad caudam spectantes; sic ut scorpio laedit, dum manu tollitur.' From this evidence it seems that *super scorpionem draconem* deserves to be taken into account. The association *scorpio-draco* is a natural one, both having *aculeus*, and to the best of my knowledge fits the facts. On the other hand, the sense demands that the fish should have been edible, and although its firm flesh is said to taste good<sup>6</sup> it is rather difficult to find references<sup>7</sup> in Greek or Latin literature to prove this save Gal. 6. 726–7 Kühn (cf. Hippocr. *cib.* 19 p. 192 Rose). Finally, *pisciculum marinum* can be understood (with Gaselee according to Díaz y Díaz's apparatus) simply as an explanatory gloss on the fish-name which eventually encroached on *draconem*.

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<sup>1</sup> The text is that of M.C. Díaz y Díaz (*Petronio Arbitro. Satiricón*, Barcelona, 1968–9).

<sup>2</sup> In Burman's commentary (Amsterdam, 1743).

<sup>3</sup> For other proposals, see K.F.C. Rose–J.P. Sullivan (*CQ* 18 (1968), 180–4) and S.J. Bastomsky (*Emerita* 37 (1969), 367–70).

<sup>4</sup> Surely one of the Weevers, probably

the Lesser Weever (see J. –G. Lythgoe, *Fishes of the Sea* (London, 1971), p. 229).

<sup>5</sup> See D'A.W. Thompson, *A Glossary of Greek Fishes* (London, 1947), pp. 56–7; E. de Saint-Denis, *Le Vocabulaire des animaux marins en latin classique* (Paris, 1947), p. 33.

<sup>6</sup> See A. Davidson, *Mediterranean Seafood* (Harmondsworth, 1972), p. 132.

<sup>7</sup> Most of them are concerned with particulars of external structure and remedies for its sting.